

# The Society Page January 2015

## THE HISTORY OF GILROY CHURCHES

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24TH @ 1:30 P.M.  
At the GILROY LIBRARY, Community Room  
350 West Sixth Street





Do you know which was Gilroy's first Church? Is it still standing?  
 Can you name a scandal that shook the Methodist Church to its foundations a century ago?  
 What happened to the original St. Stephen's Church building, and where was it located?  
 Do you remember the Old St. Mary Convent School?

Find out when you hear historian Elizabeth Barratt tell of the origins of Gilroy's first churches and see pictures of these foundations of our community.

Light refreshments will be served.

## MAKING MERRY AT THE WILLEY HOUSE

Cheer Leader, **Betty Kelly** (lead museum volunteer on Tuesdays) again spearheaded our joyful Christmas Lunch on Wednesday, December 3rd. Volunteers and Board Members gathered at the Willey House to celebrate the season and our sixth successful year of operating the Gilroy Museum. **Tom Howard** gave an oral report on the achievements of 2014. Each guest received a special gift, an ornament with a picture of the Museum on it. **Barbara Biafore** donated beautiful cyclamen plants for each table, which the guests took home. The festive occasion was catered by David Bozzo and, judging by the noise level, was enjoyed by all!



## OUR GENEROUS DONORS

You've done it again! 52 donors have supported our efforts at the Gilroy Museum by contributing to our endowment fund with the Gilroy Foundation. We received over \$6000 from our year-end appeal! It is very gratifying to receive such a tangible reward for our volunteer efforts. We are now more than halfway towards our goal of a \$500,000 endowment that will generate enough income to pay a professional director half time. Your contributions and volunteer support ensure that the legacy of Gilroy's rich history will be passed on to future community members. A complete list of donors will be published in our next issue.

## 2014 BY THE NUMBERS

- Number of Museum volunteers -29

- Number of days/hours the Museum was open - 111 days/729 hours
- Number of volunteer hours worked - 2477 hours
- Number of items for sale at the Museum - 16
- Number of adult visitors at the Museum this year - 891
- Number of school children visiting the Museum - 545
- Number of members of the Society - 145 (32 life members, 113 annual members)
- Number of dollars earned at the Garlic Festival - \$860.30

## MUSEUM NEWS

**Karen Pedigo** and **Maureen Hunter** spent all day at Las Animas School in November speaking to five third-grade classes. They took our new Traveling Suitcases that hold Indian teaching materials and 1890's teaching materials. These were previously in heavy wicker trunks. They are much easier to transport now in new "spinner" wheeled cases.

El Roble third graders and Luigi Aprea third graders toured the Museum recently. While one class was inside viewing exhibits and getting explanations from **Tom Howard** and **Phill Laursen**, another class was getting a walking tour of downtown. Tour leader **Connie Rogers** showed them several significant buildings and two of the sculptures, explaining their place in history. Fran and Bobby, owners of the Old City Hall Restaurant, always graciously let the tour group check out the clock, the old city safe and the former jail cells.

The last of the books and materials left by the library in 1975 have finally been removed from their basement storage room, freeing up much needed storage. Last spring **Tom Howard** sold the best books to antique book dealers. Then he conducted a very successful book sale. This earned \$5340 which was deposited in the City's Museum Trust Fund. The remaining few books were donated to Friends of the Library and a reading program in Africa.

**Tom Howard** and his son Sam have just completed another major improvement, the installation of new shelving in the Museum basement storage area. The new metal grid work shelves will help our collection "breathe."

The City of Gilroy generously gave us a \$2200 stipend to use for contractual services. Last year we used this money to send three volunteers to an archives workshop and sponsored a photo workshop at the Gilroy Library with photo conservator Gawain Weaver. He also evaluated our photo collection and gave us recommendations. In 2015 we are planning to use this stipend for a fabric conservation workshop to which we will invite other nearby historical societies.

Many of our stalwart volunteers are helping convert the list of items in our collection into a database using Past Perfect museum software. This requires measuring and photographing each object and entering data on its history and source. It is a multi-year project, but when completed will allow us to know exactly what we have and where it is located!

## STEVE YVASKA WAS A HIT

Twenty-six members and friends brought their treasures to Old City Hall on November 1st, for Steve Yvaska, antiques columnist for the Mercury News, to evaluate. After a delicious lunch, Steve spoke for more than an hour. He was humorous and delightful, reminding us that value is only relative to what someone is willing to pay for an antique. The array of artifacts was fascinating: a 1930's Erector Set in a red metal suitcase in mint condition, brought by **Phill Laursen**, his grandfather's baseball glove brought by **Jay Baks**, an opium scale brought by **Linda White** and many other interesting items. If we have questions Mr. Yvaska invited us to contact him at [steve.yvaska@sbcglobal.net](mailto:steve.yvaska@sbcglobal.net)



## NEW LIFE FOR THE HOLLOWAY HOUSE

Several months ago we reported that the Holloway House at 7539 Egleberry Street was for sale, tactfully not mentioning that it needed many exterior repairs. Now we have great news! Jeff and Barbara Orth, long time local residents, bought the house and have wasted no time in attacking its maintenance needs. They plan to restore the house to its original glory and have already moved into their office on the main floor. The exterior rehabilitation needs will be taken care of during 2015, but they are open for business now! Integrated Financial Benefits can be found at [www.ififinancial.com](http://www.ififinancial.com). When the rehabilitation is complete the Society will be pleased and proud to present the Holloway House with a National Register plaque.

This elegant Queen Anne Victorian with its turret and gambrel gables with arched windows was the height of fashion in 1903 when it was designed by the famous central coast architect, William Weeks. The owners, Edgar and Dora Holloway, were prominent civic leaders. In 1906 Mr. Holloway designed the sewer system and electric plant for the City of Gilroy. It has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1982.



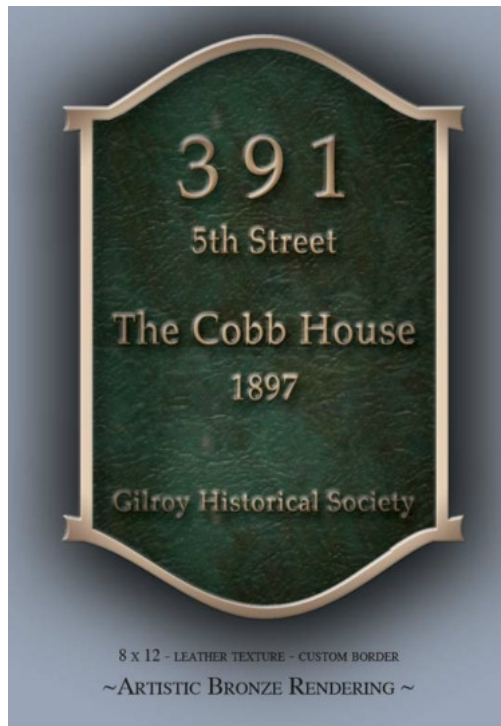
## MILLER RED BARN PROGRESS

The Miller Red Barn Committee continues to make progress under the protective financial wing of the Gilroy Foundation. They have created a Power Point presentation, which they hope to show to clubs and civic groups. Can you invite them to any groups you belong to? Contact **Sarah Kelly** at [skelly@garlic.com](mailto:skelly@garlic.com) or 408-847-4804 to make arrangements. They are also planning to meet with City Council members to share information and present ideas for funding and use of the barn.



## PLAQUES FOR OUR HISTORIC HOMES

You may have seen the green plaques on many of our historic buildings downtown, but did you know we also have a residential plaque program? If your home is on Gilroy's Historic Building Inventory or if you know the year built and the name of the builder or original owner, then you may qualify for a plaque. More than a dozen homes have plaques now and you could join them! A group of historic home owners designed the plaques, which must be specially ordered at a cost of \$225. Here is what the plaques look like. If you're interested, contact Kathy Hodgdon at [kathodgdon@hotmail.com](mailto:kathodgdon@hotmail.com) or 408-842-1517 for an application form.



## SOUTHERN PACIFIC MURAL RESTORATION

Have you noticed Scott Lance restoring the colorful mural of the Southern Pacific locomotive on the south wall of the Fifth Street Coffee Shop? By the time you read this he should be finished. The restoration was inspired by the program the Society had in October 2013 that featured a book titled [El Camino Real, Highway 101 and the Route of the Daylight](#). Gary Plomp, a railroad buff who attended the program, insisted we help get the mural restored. With a great deal of assistance from Joan Buchanan and funding from the property owner, Joe Rizzuto, the Gilroy Downtown Association and a contribution from the Society, the restoration has become a handsome reality!



# GENTLE REMINDERS

Even though we like to support local merchants, who doesn't order from Amazon now and then? You can help raise funds for the Gilroy Historical Society by ordering through [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com). You will get the same products and service as on the regular Amazon website and the Society will receive .5% of the amount of your order. We are registered with Smile Amazon and have already received one check for \$10.

And don't forget to check our website at [www.gilroyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.gilroyhistoricalsociety.org). There is an easy way to access our Facebook page by clicking a link on our website. Or you can go to [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com) and enter Gilroy Historical Society on the search line. In either case, be sure to "like" us on Facebook!

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